

five tanks the infantry soon penetrated deeply into the German position, in the face of stubborn resistance. The passage of the canal was forced at several points and the slopes on the farther bank secured. Bridges were then quickly constructed and the leading divisions passed over. At the end of the day a substantial advance had been made all along the front of attack. Ten thousand prisoners and two hundred guns were taken. Next day the movement was continued and several fortified villages carried by assault. The bombardment begun on the morning of September 27 had been maintained along the whole front of the Fourth Army for forty-eight hours without intermission. During that day alone the British artillery fired 943,837 shells, weighing 40,000 tons. This was a greater expenditure of ammunition than had been made in the entire South African war lasting three years. The troops in the German front line were driven by this intense fire into their deep dugouts and tunnels and their provision parties were unable to bring up food and ammunition.

On the morning of September 29 an attack was made on a front of twelve miles, extending northward from Holnon by two British and one American corps, aided by a large fleet of tanks. On the right of the Fourth Army the French First Army continued the attack in the sector of St. Quentin, while on its left two corps of the Third Army also attacked. One division of the Fourth British Army stormed the village of Bellenglise on the eastern side of the canal, some troops crossing the canal on foot bridges which the enemy had not been allowed time to destroy, others equipped with life-belts and carrying mats, rafts, and scaling ladders dropped down the steep sides of the canal and swam or waded across. The German trenches with their posts in the great tunnel were carried and the garrison of the village surrounded and taken. The 46th Midland division alone took 4,600 prisoners and more than a thousand machine guns. The second American corps further north was obstinately opposed, but succeeded in carrying the main points of resistance. The Third Army captured Masnières and secured the crossings of the canal on the outskirts of Cambrai. The Canadian Corps gained ground to the northwest of that town, taking two villages. Attacks continued on all these fronts for the next two days. On September 30 the gap in the Hindenburg line was considerably enlarged. The Germans abandoned two of their main positions on the west side of the canal and retired behind it. Next day the First French Army attacked from the west, taking the greater part of St. Quentin, driving the enemy from house to house, while the Australian Corps and a British division attacked on their left, reaching the railway beyond the canal. Wet weather accompanied by high winds drenched the troops and soaked the fields, but did not stop the advance. On October 2 the French took the remainder of St. Quentin and their lines south of the town were advanced to the river Oise. South of Cambrai the New Zealand division and one British division took two fortified villages, while north of that town the Canadian corps cleared the high ground. The fighting here was extremely severe, as in the course of five days the Germans employed